

## ADDA BILISUMMAA OROMOO (ABO-WBO)

OROMO LIBERATION FRONT



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### Ethiopia has once again Closed the Door on Peaceful Resolution in Oromia

*(OLF-OLA Press Release)*

Over the past weeks, the Abiy regime has shown that it had chosen to double down on its long-held position of dealing with the conflict in Oromia through the use of force. This standing policy is currently put into action two ways. First, Abiy has heightened his scorched earth assault that mainly targets civilians and entire populations that are believed to be supporters of the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA). The all-out war of destruction and daily aerial attacks on civilians has resulted in an unprecedented carnage. Second, the regime has started, once again, sending its cadres and sympathizers dubbed “Aba Gadas,” or “cultural elders” to different regions in Oromia in the name of peaceful resolution to sow discord among our regional commanders. These “traditional elders” are being used by the regime to shun the international community’s call for proper mediation. In so doing, the regime has continued to deny proper recognition to the misery of the Oromo people.

A good number of Ethiopian observers attribute the regime’s failure to fittingly acknowledge the conflict in Oromia to its confidence that it can contain the OLA by force. This couldn’t be further from the truth. The government’s gratuitous cageyness to admit the carnage in Oromia not only for what it is today, but also what it could grow into if the current trend continues, has little to do, if anything, with the regime’s ability to arrest the conflict by force. Over the past few years, the 4-kilo has done everything in its power to neutralize the OLA, and it knows full well that it has failed, and repeatedly so.

The denial of acknowledgment and proper resolution to the suffering in Oromia flows mainly from Oromia’s unmatched role in determining the regime’s ability to hold on to 4-kilo. Oromia being the major source of political and economic power of the Ethiopian state, Abiy perceives any negotiated concession in Oromia as the loss of everything, or, at the very least, as a beginning to his end. The Ethiopian government is not ready for any form of a negotiated settlement. It bears reminding that conflicts of far less intensity have been given far more attention elsewhere in Africa and beyond. The OLA’s repeated calls for proper resolution to the conflict remain unheeded by Ethiopia precisely because of Oromia’s unrivaled role in shouldering the Ethiopian state, and the consequent fear that concessions to the OLA might fundamentally disturb the current power dynamics. In that, the regime’s approach to the conflict in Oromia contrasts with the one in Tigray.

As a result, in parallel with the ongoing military assault against the Oromo nation, the regime is instigating what should be described as an ethnic bloodbath between Amhara and Oromo communities by reassigning Amhara Special Forces and Fanno militia to Horro Guduru areas of north-western Oromia. The plan is to divert the vertical political conflict between the OLA and regime by creating a horizontal communal violence of a purely ethnic nature. We have reasons to believe that such horizontal conflicts are planned in other parts of Oromia as well. The OLA has so far carefully avoided escalating this communal violence authored in 4-kilo.

If the past four years are any guide, military campaigns in Oromia have failed, and have failed miserably. “Mediations” through the regime’s cadres—whatever elderly title they carry for the day—will not work, either. Until a measure of trust is established to begin proper negotiations, all mediations ought to be through internationally sanctioned neutral third state actors. At this point in time, this is necessary for a number of reasons:

1. While great majority of the Oromo people support the OLA, the remaining few closely work with the regime in various capacities. In today’s polarized political landscape, finding a neutral third person in the country is a far cry from a viable possibility.
2. Meaningful mediation requires proper skills, logistics, and related facilities. Commanders and negotiators should be moved in and out of conflict zones. The necessary security guarantees and logistics can only be sourced internationally.
3. To be effective the process of mediation should be formalized and observed by neutral third states. Anything less will be a repeat of the failed ‘Asmara Agreement’ between the OLF and the Abiy regime.
4. Only international actors can be guarantors for the enforcement of mediation agreements. This is a singularly crucial piece of the puzzle. Even internationally, only a few actors can guarantee implementation.

To the prospect of peaceful resolution in Oromia!

OLF-OLA High Command

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